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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/936,564	09/14/2001	Sakae Matsumoto	XA-9544	7144

181 7590 10/30/2002

MILES & STOCKBRIDGE PC
1751 PINNACLE DRIVE
SUITE 500
MCLEAN, VA 22102-3833

EXAMINER

VAN PELT, BRADLEY J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3682	

3682

DATE MAILED: 10/30/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/936,564

Applicant(s)

MATSUMOTO ET AL.

Examiner

Bradley J Van Pelt

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1 and 2 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1 and 2 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 3 . 6) Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamaguchi (USPN 4,098,141) in view of Nagazumi (USPN 3,899,937). Yamaguchi discloses a coupling structure of extensible shafts fig. 2, characterized by comprising: an inner shaft (13) having a fitting portion; an outer shaft (16) having a fitting portion so fitted to said fitting portion of said inner shaft as to be extensible in the axial direction and incapable of rotating; a concave groove (g) formed in said fitting portion of said inner shaft; filling holes (h), formed in said fitting portion of said outer shaft, through which said concave groove is filled with a resin (15); and resinous slide portions thus formed on said fitting portions of said inner and outer shafts. Yamaguchi, however, does not disclose a low frictional member that is attached to an inner peripheral surface of a front side end of said fitting portion of said outer shaft.

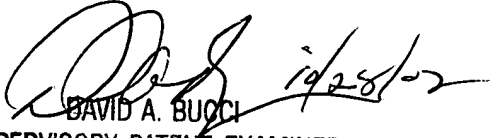
Nagazumi renders obvious a collapsible steering column assembly, fig. 5a, with a low frictional member (66) that is attached to an inner peripheral surface of a front side end of a fitting portion of an outer shaft (30). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the apparatus of Yamaguchi to include a low frictional member on the inner shaft for the purpose of easing the collapsing process of a steering column.

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3. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamaguchi in view of Nagazumi as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Eming (USPN 5,806,985). Eming renders obvious a low frictional member constructed of a ring (1), fig. 3, made of a synthetic resin (see column 3 lines 15-24) adapted for the use in a structure of extensible shafts. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the reference combination set forth above to include a low frictional ring member for the purpose of easing the collapsing process of a steering column.

Conclusion

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The following includes collapsible shafts like that of the instantly claimed invention: Stephan (USPN 4,183,258), Sato et al (USPN 5,225,720), Moriyama (USPN 5,791,686), Aota et al (USPN 5,954,362).


DAVID A. BUCCI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600


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5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bradley J Van Pelt whose telephone number is (703)305-8176.

The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7:00-4:30, 2nd F 7:00-3:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David A Bucci can be reached on (703)308-3668. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703)305-3597.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-2168.

BJVP 
October 17, 2002